

extraction by a micro-volume of solvent, wherein the extraction means includes a solid support in the form of multiple fibres which may be coated or uncoated, the fibres and/or the coating being selected, based upon selectivity of the fibres and/or coating for at least one of the analytes present in the sample, and wherein the extraction means either samples a head space near the sample or samples the sample directly.

Cancel Claims 2 to 4.

Re-write Claims 5, 7, 8, and 9 as follows.

5. (amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, additionally comprising means for shielding the fibers from the atmosphere, such that the fibers are drawn up inside the shield means.

7. (twice amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the coating is an organic material selected from the group consisting of polyethyleneglycol and methoxy polyethyleneglycol, silicone, polyimide, divinylbenzene, polyacrylate, carbon-based sorbents and ion-exchange materials.

8. (amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the fibers are of a material selected from the group consisting of fused silica, graphite, solid polymers and metals .

9. (amended) An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the fibres are of fused silica, and the coating is of silicone.

Add new Claims 20 to 23.

20. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the fibers are solid fibers or hollow fibers .

21. An apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein the coatings are selected from absorption- and adsorption-type coatings

22. An apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein the coatings are identical or different.

23. An apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein the fibers are hollow fibers, coated on the outside or the inside.

Amend Claim 10 as follows.

10. (twice amended) A method for solid phase micro extraction of analytes included in a fluid or a solid sample, comprising

(a) exposing a fluid or a solid sample including target analytes in a gas-tight enclosure, to a solid support in the form of multiple fibers which may be coated or uncoated, the fibers and/or the coating being selected based upon selectivity of the fibers and/or coating for at least one of the analytes in the sample, for a sufficient time to permit chemical extraction of the analytes by the fibers to occur, wherein the multiple fibers either samples a head space near the sample or samples the sample directly, and

(b) ending said exposure and then placing said solid support into a micro volume of solvent where chemical desorption of the analytes from the support occurs.

Cancel Claims 11 and 12.

Re-write Claims 13, 14, 16 and 17 as follows.

13. (amended) A method according to Claim 10, wherein the solvent is a suitable organic solvent.

14. (amended) A method according to Claim 10, wherein the chemical extraction is by absorption or adsorption of the target analyte by the fibers or coating.

16. (amended) A method according to Claim 10 wherein the fibers are uncoated.

17. (amended) A method according to Claim 16, wherein the fibers are of fused silica.

Enter new Claims 24 and 25 as follows.

24. A method according to Claim 10, including the additional step of

(c) storing and archiving the microvolume of solvent containing the dissolved analytes until a convenient time for analysis.

25. A method according to Claim 10, wherein step (b) the solvent containing the extracted analytes are shielded from volatilizing into the atmosphere.

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for her helpful discussion of the issues remaining in this case at a telephone Interview of 12 May 2003. We look forward to receipt of an Interview Summary Record in due course.

By this amendment, Claims 2 to 4, 11 and 12 have been cancelled, and new Claims 20 to 25 added to further define our invention. It is noted that the number of claims in the application is still below twenty. Accordingly, no